neration should be earmarked for the social forestry programme. The State Governments have been advised to give the highest priority to programmes of minor irrigation, soil conservation and afforestation.

Increase in the price of ghee

*156. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR:

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the market price of Ghee, specially that produced by the Dairy Cooperative sector and supported by Central grants, aids and loans has escalated recently without any corresponding increase in the milk prices for the producers by the Cooperative sector plants and if so, the corrective steps proposed to be taken in this regard; and

(b) whether Government propose to set up Farm Producer Price Fixation Authority throughout the country to fix maximum producer and consumer price, with representation of producers/consumers and Government?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI G. S. DHILLON): (a) Price of deshi ghee is generally influenced by the behaviour of the prices of edible oils, feed, fodder, milk and prices of other essential commodities. There has been increase in the price of desi ghee recently and also increase in the procurement price of milk. Production and marketing of desi ghee is largely in the hands of unorganised sector. However, keeping in view the interest of producers and consumers, the Government have undertaken a number of programme for enhancement of milk production so that prices of milk and milk products are maintained at reasonable level.

(b) There is no such proposal under consideration at this stage.

Import of Coal

*157. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that previous foreign exchange is being spent every year on the import of coking coal for various industrial purposes;

(b) if so, how much amount has been spent during the last three financial years, on this account; and

(c) what steps have been taken to improve the quality of indigenous coal to minimise the dependence on imported coal?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) and (b) The quantity and value of coking coal imported by the steel industry during the last tthree years is as follows:—

Year	Quantity imported (SAIL & TISCO) (in million tonnes)	Approximate C & F Value (Rs. in crores)
1983-84*	0.463	37.5
1984-85*	0.665	55.8
1985-86	2.454	195.8

*Only SAIL imported during 1983-84 and 1984-85.

(c) To minimise imports, steps are being taken to increase production of the right quality of indigenous coking coal. Sone of the remedial measures taken by Coal India Limited for improving the quality of coal delivered to the steel plants are:—

(i) Elimination of extraneous impurities in the feed coal and stringent quality control.

(ii) Elimination of offending sources of supply of raw coal feed which have been identified.

(iii) Better management of existing washeries, aimed at optimisation in performance levels.